

Ohio Newspapers' Coverage of the 1963 Birmingham Protests: A Media Content Analysis

A Senior Thesis

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by

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Civil Rights Time Line

1954: May, *Brown v. Board of Education* is decided.

1955: January, President Eisenhower issues Executive Order 10590, establishing a presidential committee to enforce nondiscrimination in federal hiring. May, *Brown II* decided: establishing “all deliberate speed” as the test of compliance with *Brown I*. August, 14 year old Emmett Till is beaten, shot, and lynched in Mississippi.

1956: December, Montgomery Bus Boycott successfully ends.

1957: September, “Little Rock Nine” incident at Central High School in Arkansas. September, Civil Rights Act of 1957 is signed by President Dwight Eisenhower.

1960: February, widespread lunch counter sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina. April, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is founded. May, Civil Rights Act of 1960 is signed by President Dwight Eisenhower.

1961: March, President Kennedy issues Executive Order 10925 creating what later became the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. May, Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organizes Freedom Rides through the South.

1962: October, James Meredith is the first black student admitted to the University of Mississippi. November, President Kennedy issues Executive Order 11063 banning segregation in federally funded housing.

1963: May, massive protests in Birmingham. June, President Kennedy proposes civil rights legislation following the Birmingham protests. June, Medgar Evers is murdered. November, President Kennedy is assassinated.

1964: January, the 24th Amendment, abolishing the Poll Tax, is ratified. June, Freedom Summer: large voter registration drive in Mississippi and other southern states. July, Civil Rights

Act of 1964 is signed by President Lyndon Johnson.

1965: August, Voting Rights Act of 1965 is signed by President Lyndon Johnson.

September, President Johnson issues Executive Order 11246 which enforces affirmative action, at the federal level, for the first time.

1966: African Americans living in the South and the Border States vote in larger numbers for the first time since Reconstruction.

Introduction

The struggle for civil rights for African Americans can be traced back to abolitionists in the early nineteenth century such as William Lloyd Garrison, Fredrick Douglass, Arthur Tappan, and Harriet Tubman. Fruits of their and others' labor were realized during Reconstruction in the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s with the ratification of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Following these successes, significant setbacks befell the movement for African Americans' rights. These setbacks lasted from the end of Reconstruction through the first half of the twentieth century. Beginning with the seminal and unanimous *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* in May of 1954, the civil rights movement received a much needed revitalization. Despite the growth and expansion of the civil rights movement between the *Brown* decision in 1954 and the Birmingham protests in 1963, little progress was made in enfranchising African Americans or ending segregation in public and private facilities in the South and Border States. Schools in the South, and many in the North, were still predominantly segregated in 1963. De facto and de jure segregation still dominated the South and many parts of the North. Following the hard fought success of the Birmingham protests, however, formalized and legalized segregation began disintegrating, particularly at the federal level, as the 24th amendment abolishing the poll tax, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 became law within three years of the Birmingham protests.

My thesis is a media content analysis of how six Ohio newspapers (the Cincinnati Enquirer, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Columbus Evening Dispatch, Akron Beacon Journal, Toledo Blade, Cleveland Call and Post) and the Chicago Tribune reported the Birmingham protests and their immediate aftermath. This project has three primary objectives: to examine how the civil rights movement was covered in Ohio, compare that coverage among newspapers in Ohio, and

compare Ohio newspapers' coverage with that of the Chicago Tribune. This methodology is intended to shed light on where the differences in coverage arise from. Overall, my goal is to understand better how the Birmingham protests and their aftermath were reported to Ohioans and to develop a clearer picture of how Ohioans viewed and responded to these events by examining the content of these newspapers.

Explanation of Selections

Ohio, which was the most demographically representative state in the union in the 1950s and 1960s, provides an excellent case to analyze given its unique position as a racially diverse, politically important, northern swing state. Ohio's regional heterogeneity as a state makes it an especially valuable state to look at. This heterogeneity can be seen in the profound differences found within Ohio. Cincinnati has a strong connection to the South and has more in common with Louisville than it does with Cleveland. Cleveland, on the other hand, is a large city that historically has more of a New England or Middle Atlantic States' attitude. Toledo is more associated with Michigan than it is with Ohio, and Akron, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, was a famous manufacturing center, world renowned for its production of rubber products. One can argue that Ohio then was a good representative of the North as a whole. Ohio's representativeness is enhanced by its combination of large cities, such as Cleveland and Cincinnati, and many small towns. Given Ohio's demographic and cultural diversity, looking at a cross-section of Ohio will provide excellent insight into the broader northern reaction to the protests in Birmingham, their aftermath, and the proposed civil rights legislation that followed.

In 1963, Americans received their news primarily from four different sources: television, radio, newspapers, and magazines. Ohioans were no different. Television and radio are both extremely difficult to study and analyze due to the limited availability of television news and

radio broadcasts from the early 1960s. Even if the broadcasts were available, it is doubtful that radio and television would provide the quantity and quality of data needed for this project.

Television and radio news broadcasts also rarely go into the depth necessary for this kind of study. Magazines, due to their weekly, biweekly, or monthly circulation, provide less data and more delayed coverage. Although magazines often provide the requisite depth of coverage, the limited amount and lack of immediacy of their coverage weakens their usefulness. Cities within Ohio also do not have their own magazines that cover news in a manner comparable to newspapers; nationally distributed magazine coverage would be much more homogeneous than local newspapers. Given how quickly the Birmingham protests evolved, the importance of immediacy and day to day coverage cannot be understated.

Newspapers, in contrast to radio, television, and magazines, are excellent primary sources and are especially insightful in Ohio, which had an abundance of daily newspapers with large circulations. Thus, newspapers are the best source of information for this project, because of the availability of comprehensive microfilm, their numerically large, but geographically limited circulations, and the detailed data they provide as a result of their daily publication. Newspapers also offer a valuable visual component with photos of the protests, close-up photos of the leading individuals involved in the protests, and political cartoons. Furthermore, newspapers reveal how the Birmingham protests were covered and reported to different cities within Ohio, thus giving a more precise picture of how the civil rights movement was reported to Ohioans across the state.

It is prudent to remember that newspapers had a significantly larger impact, and were comparatively more important, in 1963 than they are today because there were far fewer news and information outlets 57 years ago. The entrance of new forms of media, the Internet and cable news for example, have substantially reduced the clout of newspapers in today's media market.

Though newspapers were in the beginning phase of their declining importance in 1963, largely due to the spread of television, newspapers were still an important source of news for many Americans and Ohioans. Television news in 1963 was a smaller resource than it later became. When analyzing any set of newspapers, it is vital to note and factor in the possibility of bias. This bias could come from the owners, the editors, the editorial board, and the journalists. Bias could result in increased or decreased coverage and it could slant the coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath to be more favorable or more negative. Bias can be most profound in the writing and selection of editorials, letters to the editor, and political cartoons. When looking at any content in these newspapers, particularly in opinion pieces, this paper will be cognizant of editorial bias and slant. Although nothing can be done to eliminate or completely negate these possible biases, they should, and will not, be ignored.

The six Ohio newspapers examined in this project, when combined with one another, provide a diverse portrayal of the coverage provided to Ohioans across the state. Dominant newspapers of five of Ohio's largest cities (Cincinnati Enquirer, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Toledo Blade, Akron Beacon Journal, and Columbus Evening Dispatch) make up the majority of the newspapers examined in my thesis. Included in the Ohio newspapers are four morning papers (Enquirer, Plain Dealer, Beacon Journal, and Blade), one evening paper (Dispatch), and one weekly paper (Call and Post). A majority of the papers chosen are morning papers because most Ohioans got their news from morning newspapers. A large evening newspaper (Dispatch) and a weekly newspaper (Call and Post) are included because Ohioans in 1963 also received news from evening and weekly newspapers. The Evening Dispatch, for example, was one of the largest circulating newspapers in Ohio in 1963. These five newspapers and the Chicago Tribune all enjoyed large circulations in 1963.

My choice of cities, and newspapers, were made with the expressed purpose of achieving a geographical balance while also including the largest and most prominent cities in Ohio. Major metropolitan newspapers in Ohio were chosen rather than more rural newspapers because of the larger readership and greater coverage that the newspapers provided. Dayton and its largest morning newspaper the Dayton Daily News, the other logical city and newspaper combination to include in an analysis of major Ohio newspapers, was not included due to time constraints.

The inclusion of the Cleveland Call and Post, one of the most prominent African American newspapers in Ohio at the time, provides insight into how the African American press covered the Birmingham protests. It also reveals how African Americans in Ohio reacted to the protests unfolding in Birmingham and the broader civil rights movement unfolding across the South. Considering that the Birmingham protests revolved around the social and economic well being of African Americans, the value of including an African American newspaper is easily apparent. Owners, editors, writers, and readers of the Call and Post had a much larger vested interest in the Birmingham protests and their aftermath than any of the six other newspapers. The Cleveland Call and Post also serves as an excellent control to compare with the other six, predominantly white newspapers. The Chicago Tribune, the paper of record for the Midwest in the 1960s, serves as another useful control and comparison point. In 1963, the Chicago Tribune had one of the largest circulations of any newspaper in the Midwest. Adding the Chicago Tribune provides a measuring stick of sorts for the Ohio newspapers and this will prove useful in placing the Ohio newspapers in a coverage spectrum.

Populations

The tables and charts on the following pages use only metropolitan population figures. They detail the total populations, the percentage of the population classified as non-white, the

percentage of the population that was Negro (African American), and the African American populations for the six cities analyzed: Akron, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo. All of the population information and statistics are taken from the 1960 United States Census and are approximate population figures for 1963. The African American population numbers were estimated by taking the percentage of the population classified as non-white and multiplying that by the statewide percent of the urban non-white population that was African American.

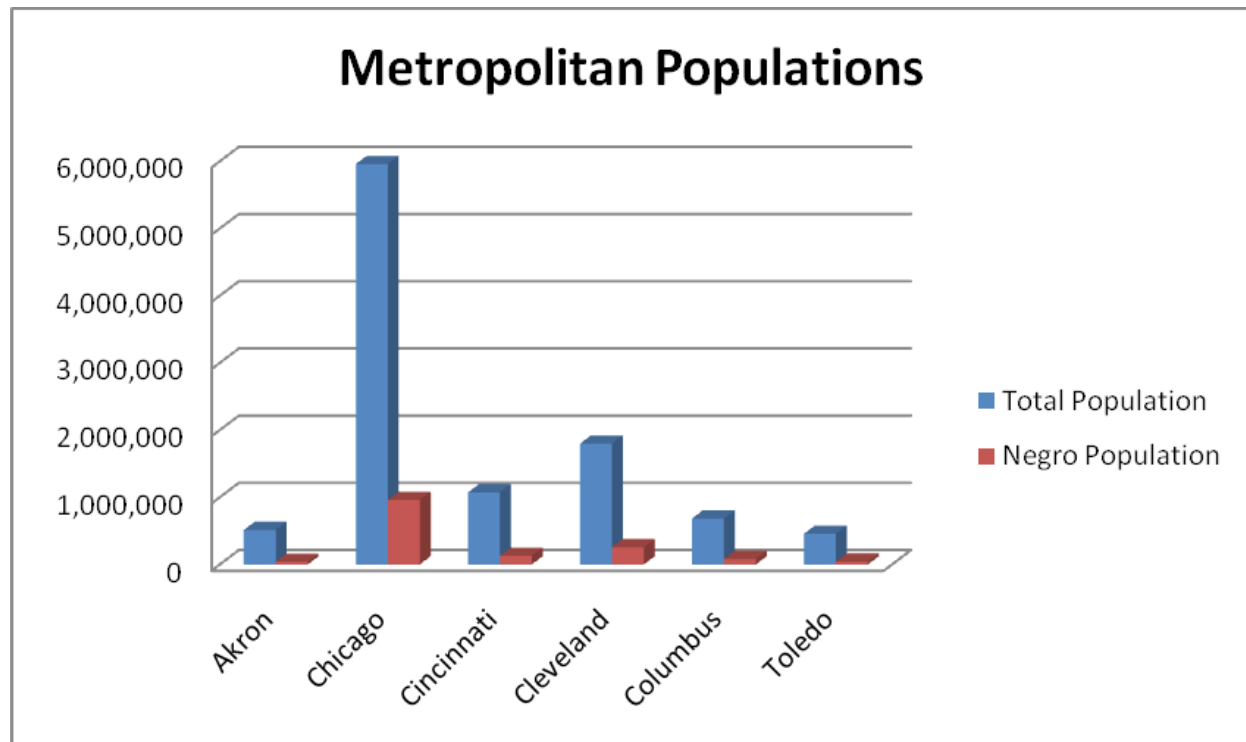
For Illinois, 96.914 percent of the urban non-white population was African American and the percentage of Chicago's metropolitan population classified as non-white was 16.6 percent. Following from this, it can be estimated that 16.1 percent, which comes out to 958,701 people, of Chicago's metropolitan population was African American. For the five cities in Ohio, the exact same process was followed, but with Ohio data. Chicago had the largest total population, 5,959,213 people, the largest African American population, 958,701 people, and the largest African American population by percentage, 16.6. In Ohio, Cleveland had the largest total population, 1,796,595 people, the largest African American population, 257,270 people, and the largest African American population by percentage, 14.5. Toledo had the smallest total population, 456,931 and the smallest African American population, 42,868. Akron had the smallest African American population by percentage, 8.1. The following chart and tables provide population figures for all of the cities analyzed.

Total Populations Table 1					
Akron	Chicago	Cincinnati	Cleveland	Columbus	Toledo
513,569	5,959,213	1,071,624	1,796,595	682,962	456,931

Percent Non-White of Total Populations Table 1.1					
Akron	Chicago	Cincinnati	Cleveland	Columbus	Toledo
8.1%	16.6%	12.1%	14.5%	11.9%	9.5%

Percent African American of Total Populations Table 1.2					
Akron	Chicago	Cincinnati	Cleveland	Columbus	Toledo
8.0%	16.1%	11.9%	14.3%	11.8%	9.4%

Estimated Total African American Populations Table 1.3					
Akron	Chicago	Cincinnati	Cleveland	Columbus	Toledo
41,082	958,702	128,056	257,271	80,263	42,869



Hypothesis

Following from the aforementioned diversity of Ohio, the working hypothesis of this paper is that coverage and reaction to the protests would not be completely homogeneous across all seven newspapers. News coverage would be relatively similar from newspaper to newspaper and even identical in some cases as newspapers are likely to print the same stories from the AP or UPI about the protests. Although the stories may come from the same source, headlines and the placement of articles within the paper would likely differ amongst the seven newspapers. Significant differences would emerge in the amount and quality of the news coverage and in the quantity and slant of editorials, letters to the editor, and political cartoons. From an evaluative perspective, the more geographically northern newspapers, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Toledo Blade, and the Akron Beacon Journal seemed likely to provide more favorable coverage of the protests than the two more “southern newspapers”: the Columbus Evening Dispatch and the Cincinnati Enquirer. Furthermore, the Cleveland Call and Post, the African American weekly newspaper would likely have provided the most extensive and supportive coverage. The Chicago Tribune’s coverage would likely also be similar to that of the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Research Questions

Five research questions serve as the foundation for this project. Overall, what kind of press coverage did the Birmingham protests and their aftermaths receive in Ohio? Were there differences in coverage and reaction within Ohio itself? Which newspapers provided the most supportive and most negative coverage of the civil rights movement? How did the coverage provided by the major metropolitan and almost exclusively white newspapers (Cleveland Plain Dealer, Columbus Evening Dispatch, Toledo Blade, Akron Beacon Journal, and Chicago Tribune) compare with the coverage provided by the Cleveland Call and Post? How did the

coverage provided by the major metropolitan newspapers in Ohio compare with the coverage provided by the paper of record for the Midwest: the Chicago Tribune? The answers to these questions will increase understanding of Ohioans' views of and reactions to the Birmingham protests and provide insight, more generally, into northerners' reactions and feelings about the civil rights movement. These answers will also increase our knowledge about the diversity and social-cultural differences within Ohio itself in 1963. Lastly, this project will help provide a glimpse into the minds, thoughts, and feelings of editors, writers, and readers of Ohio newspapers, and Ohioans more broadly, from across the state in 1963.

Methods

For each of the seven newspapers analyzed from May 2, 1963 through June 18, 1963, every article, feature, editorial, advertisement, picture, letter to the editor, headline, news brief, and political cartoon pertaining to the Birmingham protests and their aftermath was studied and recorded. This documentation included the date on which something was published, its location within the newspaper, and its slant for editorials, letters to the editor, political cartoons, and certain articles. After compiling all of this information for all of the newspapers, the data was tabulated, and each paper was evaluated based on the overall quantity, quality, and slant of its coverage. Every paper except the Chicago Tribune was manually searched through microfilm by examining every page of every issue during the designated time period. The Tribune was researched digitally by topic.

When looking at the microfilm the following key search terms were used: Birmingham, Alabama, George Wallace, Bull Connor, Civil Rights, Negro Unrest, Negro Protest, Negro March, Civil Rights Legislation, Negro Rights, John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Dick Gregory, Martin Luther King Jr., Medgar Evers, NAACP, CORE, SCLC, Ralph Abernathy, Fred

Shuttlesworth, and Jackie Robinson. The decision to include or exclude an article, feature, editorial, advertisement, picture, letter to the editor, headline, news brief or political cartoon was made at the author's discretion. Some newspaper content with keywords present were excluded, while some content without any of the keywords were included. In general, however, for something to be included, the main point of the article, editorial, political cartoon, or other piece of content had to be about the Birmingham protests and/or their aftermath. Anything that only briefly mentioned and/or touched upon the protest or their aftermath was excluded. Other civil rights events occurring outside of the South within my two month window, though important, such as protests, demonstrations, and sit-ins in Los Angeles, Ohio, Chicago, and New York, were excluded.

The Chicago Tribune, unlike the other six newspapers, was searched electronically through ProQuest rather than through microfilm. Using ProQuest, through the website of the Ohio State University Library, two searches were conducted for the Chicago Tribune from May 2, 1963 through June 18, 1963. The first search used the keyword "Birmingham" and returned 184 results while the second search used the key word "Civil Rights" and returned 146 results. All 330 results were then examined and the same process as described above for the microfilm was used to determine whether to include or exclude something that had been returned as a search result. Out of the 330 results, more than 200 were included. It is important to note the possibility and probability of human error in the selection of data. Some newspaper content that should have been selected was likely not, while some content was likely included that should not have been. This possibility of error is enhanced in the newspapers examined on microfilm.

Significance

The importance of the civil rights movement of the 1960s broadly, and the May 1963

Birmingham protests specifically, in American history is unquestioned. Not surprisingly, tremendous research has been conducted on the civil rights movement itself. Many books and articles have been written on the leaders, protests, and demonstrations that shaped the movement. Little research, however, has focused on how the civil rights movement was reported to Americans by newspapers. The research that has been done involves Southern newspapers and has largely been confined to Mississippi and to the Black Press. No research has examined how the civil rights movement was covered and reported to Ohioans.

A large part of the significance of this project comes from its uniqueness. No project analyzing Ohioans' response, through Ohio newspapers, to the civil rights movement has been conducted before. From a general perspective, this project will enhance understanding of Ohio in 1963. Specifically, this project will reveal the differences, and or similarities, in sentiment within Ohio towards civil rights and federal intervention into civil rights disputes. The similarity or dissimilarity in coverage and reaction to the Birmingham protests will reveal how homogeneous or heterogeneous Ohioans' attitudes toward civil rights were in 1963. Given Ohio's diversity, looking at a cross-section of Ohio will provide an excellent insight into the broader northern reaction to protests in Birmingham and its aftermath.

The twentieth century civil rights movement spread across the country in the decade following the first *Brown* decision. From 1954 through 1964, there were countless protests, demonstrations, and events in the civil rights movement that are worthy and deserving of study. These include, but are not limited to, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the murder of Emmett Till, and the "Little Rock Nine" incident at Central High School in Little Rock. Why study the Birmingham protests rather than another earlier event like the three listed above? One important reason is that the civil rights movement achieved little success during the nine years after the first

Brown decision and before the Birmingham protests. Despite the best efforts of civil rights advocates and leaders, Jim Crow laws and school segregation were almost as firmly entrenched in May 1963 as they had been in May 1954. In the three years following the Birmingham protests, however, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were passed, which together ended Jim Crow in law.

Why Birmingham?

The dramatic protests in Birmingham were instrumental in prompting President John F. Kennedy to deliver a television address attacking racial segregation and introducing what would later become the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These protests were unique in their heavy reliance on, and mobilization, of young student protesters – some of whom were still in elementary school. Additionally, the student protesters who were the backbone of 1963 Birmingham protests and many of the other major civil rights protests during the early 1960s grew up during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and were part of the “Emmett Till” generation. The effects of the 1963 Birmingham protests were magnified by national and international media coverage and the plastering of shocking and disturbing images of police fire hoses and attack dogs unleashed on young students across front pages from coast to coast and around the world. Furthermore, the Birmingham protests proved pivotal in gaining support for the 200,000 person strong March on Washington in August 1963.

The leaders of the civil rights movement grappled with the problem of gaining and maintaining national attention for the movement. They were keenly aware of the role that the press could play in changing and shaping national public opinion about the protests.¹ Leaders like Dr. King and Reverend Shuttlesworth knew the value of television news coverage and

¹ Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, The Race Beat: The Press, The Civil Rights Struggle, and The Awakening of a Nation (New York: Random House, 2006), 317.

prominent newspaper coverage for their movement. Protests, in some cases, were designed to be television and press friendly. Furthermore, the leaders of the civil rights movement knew that conflict and large, organized marches brought and kept press attention. Bull Connor's unleashing of police fire hoses and attack dogs on student protesters and bystanders played a tremendous role in the success of the movement because his actions caused members of the press to flock to Birmingham to cover the protests. Governor Wallace's planned stand in the schoolhouse door to prevent two African Americans from enrolling at the University of Alabama had a similar effect. The actions of Connor and Wallace played a pivotal role in the successes at both Birmingham and the University of Alabama because they provided much needed attention to the previously floundering civil rights movement.

It is clear that the Birmingham protests were of immense importance in the civil rights movement in the 1960s. In addition to their pivotal role in the movement and in American history, the protests are also well suited to be studied through newspapers. Unlike some other civil rights events, such as assassinations, bombings, boycotts, and demonstrations, the Birmingham protests unfolded over a few months, which is an optimal length of time to study when using newspapers. Assassinations, bombings, and other more immediate events that begin and end within one or a few days provide too few days of coverage for newspapers and are often over before the national media can get to a given location to document what is going on.

Other events such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott lasted too long, more than a year in that particular case, to be effectively researched in a short amount of time. Additionally, these lengthier events prove problematic because newspapers' coverage of them is not consistent throughout. Weeks, and even months, could go by without more than a few token articles covering the ongoing event. These truly lengthy protests tend to provide too little, and too

disparate data. The Birmingham protests, on the other hand, were covered in detail on a near daily basis by almost every newspaper for the duration of this study.

The start and end dates for this project, May 2, 1963 and June 18, 1963 were chosen for two specific reasons. Although the Birmingham protests and boycott did not officially begin on May 2, 1963, the protests were first reported in Ohio newspapers on May 2, 1963. Similarly, the Birmingham protests did not end on June 18, 1963, but June 18 is a full week after President Kennedy gave his prime time, national television speech condemning racial segregation and introducing comprehensive civil rights legislation. This extra week allows newspapers the opportunity to write editorials, publish letters to the editor, draw political cartoons, and provide full coverage of Kennedy's historic speech. A time period of a month and a half provides the optimum amount of data to examine and analyze the Birmingham protests and their aftermath in a thorough, but timely manner.

Throughout this paper, the main focus of this project is referred to as the May 1963 Birmingham protests and their aftermath. It is important to define the aftermath and explicitly mention which civil rights events are included in the term aftermath; which events in addition to the Birmingham protests were included in the analysis. Before explicitly defining which events fit in the aftermath and which do not, it is vital to note why the Birmingham confrontation had such a large and profound aftermath. The size, scale, and audacity of the Birmingham protests inspired other would be protesters across the United States. Birmingham's largest, and most lasting, effect may have been the myriad of protests, demonstrations, and national attention on the exploding civil rights movement it caused. The civil rights movement and Martin Luther King Jr. in particular, were in desperate need of a high profile and successful boycott and protest after the disappointing failure of the Albany, Georgia protests Dr. King had led in the summer of

1962. Dr. King's protests in Birmingham provided exactly what he and the broader civil rights movement needed at the most critical time.

Other events were only eligible to be included in the “aftermath” if they occurred between May 2, 1963 and June 18, 1963, were covered in the analyzed newspapers, and occurred in the South, with South being defined as states that once comprised the Confederate States of America. All of the events listed below coincided with and were partially spurred on by the size, scope, audacity, and success of the Birmingham protests. The attention that the national media placed onto the Birmingham protests grew to include other civil rights protests and demonstrations occurring across the South. As the protests grew in size, more attention was placed upon the progress, or lack thereof, that African Americans around the country had made in obtaining equal rights. Greater attention began to be paid on the lack of progress made in desegregating schools in the South. The seven newspapers studied bear this out.

Following from this, events that fall under the aftermath term include protests against segregation in Cambridge, Maryland; sit-ins at segregated restaurants and lunch counters in Raleigh, North Carolina; “freedom marchers” in Gadsden, Alabama; student led demonstrations against segregation in public facilities in Nashville, Tennessee; and anti-segregation protests in Jackson, Mississippi, Charleston, South Carolina, and Danville, Virginia. Another event more closely related to the Birmingham protests was the tumultuous integration of the University of Alabama.

A federal court ordered the University of Alabama to admit its first two African American students on May 21, 1963. Following this court decision, George Wallace, the famed segregationist governor of Alabama, publicly announced that he would be defying the federal court integration order and preventing the African American students from enrolling. In response

to this, President Kennedy federalized the Alabama National Guard and commanded it to protect the African American students and enroll them. The entire University of Alabama integration episode, from the court ruling on May 21, 1963 to the successful enrollment of the students on June 11, 1963, occurred within the designated time frame.

The final episode that falls under the aftermath label occurred toward the end of the time period under analysis. The assassination of civil rights leader, and first Mississippi NAACP field secretary, Medgar Evers on June 12, 1963 and the ensuing protests in Mississippi following his death are this final episode. Evers' murder received front page coverage and his murder, the search for his killer, his funeral, and the protests in Mississippi following his murder all received extensive coverage from June 12 through June 18, 1963 in all seven of the newspapers. Evers' funeral procession on Saturday, June 15 was attended by thousands, and anti-segregation protests erupted following the end of the funeral proceedings.²

Another aspect of the Birmingham protests is the effect they had on President Kennedy and his administration. The Birmingham protests in their entirety, from the brutality displayed by Bull Connor and the Birmingham police to the protests heavy reliance on younger protesters and students, combined with the sheer number of arrested protesters who overwhelmed Birmingham's jails – helped force President Kennedy's hand. The protests led directly to his national television address on June 11 and the subsequent introduction in Congress of his landmark civil rights legislation. It is important to note that these protests prompted Kennedy to speak out on civil rights and to introduce major legislation more directly and quickly than he would have liked.

The legislation Kennedy introduced, which became the Civil Rights Act of 1964, did more to advance legal equality for African Americans than any other piece of legislation in the

2 Akron Beacon Journal June 15, 1963 Front Page Article.

twentieth century. Moreover, the importance of Kennedy's television address to the nation on June 11, 1963 needs to be addressed. This television address, which was likely witnessed by tens of millions of Americans, informed all Americans of Kennedy's position on civil rights and his views on segregation and integration. Kennedy did not mince words in this address and it resolved many uncertainties Americans, regardless of race, may have had regarding Kennedy's view on civil rights. The most lasting achievement of the Birmingham protests is clearly Kennedy's national address and the civil rights legislation he introduced in that address.

Newspaper Data

Before proceeding into a newspaper by newspaper analysis of the information found in each paper, it is important to provide a broad overview of what was found and how the data was categorized. In the two tables on the following two pages, a statistical summary of what was found in all seven of the newspapers analyzed is provided.

Overall Newspaper Data Table 1						
	Front Page Headlines	Front Page Photos	Front Page Articles	Front Page News Briefs	Opening Section Articles	Opening Section Photos
<u>Cleveland Call and Post</u>	10	12	23	0	90	35
<u>Cleveland Plain Dealer</u>	20	16	44	0	132	21
<u>Akron Beacon Journal</u>	21	15	51	3	119	15
<u>Cincinnati Enquirer</u>	6	5	29	56	112	17
<u>Toledo Blade</u>	22	17	60	0	111	12
<u>Columbus Evening Dispatch</u>	11	12	35	7	108	14
<u>Chicago Tribune</u>	21	19	34	0	138	41
Totals	111	96	276	66	810	155

Overall Newspaper Data Table 1.1							
	Other Articles	Editorials	Letters to the Editor	Political Cartoons	Other Photos	Other News Briefs	Miscellaneous
<u>Cleveland Call and Post</u>	3	24	15	6	0	0	1
<u>Cleveland Plain Dealer</u>	10	37	26	9	7	0	0
<u>Akron Beacon Journal</u>	5	24	6	4	0	3	1
<u>Cincinnati Enquirer</u>	1	23	6	9	0	0	1
<u>Toledo Blade</u>	0	57	4	22	1	0	0
<u>Columbus Evening Dispatch</u>	1	18	4	1	0	2	0
<u>Chicago Tribune</u>	4	3	6	0	0	45	2
Totals	24	186	67	51	8	50	5

As can be seen from the data, the newspapers varied substantially in their coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. Some newspapers published a lot of political cartoons related to the Birmingham protests and civil rights, like the Toledo Blade with 22, while other newspapers, such as the Columbus Evening Dispatch with one, rarely, if ever, employed political cartoons in their coverage of that topic. Following in the same vein, some newspapers, Cleveland Plain Dealer with 16 and Akron Beacon Journal with 15, had a large number of applicable photographs on their front pages, while others, Cincinnati Enquirer with five, had very few. In

conjunction with these differences, however, the seven newspapers analyzed also shared many similarities in their coverage. All of the newspapers had at least 29 front page articles, at least 90 opening section articles, and at least six front page headlines pertaining to the Birmingham protests and their aftermath.

From a definitional standpoint, “front page”, whenever mentioned in the data, tables, graphs, and this paper refers to the actual cover page of a given newspaper. “Front page” does not mean or include the front pages of other sections that are not the actual front page of the newspaper. “Headlines” only include those headlines that are larger than a majority of the other article titles on the front page. “Opening section” includes all content in the first section of the paper, the first section behind the front page, and all content within the first news section. Most articles that are not on the front page were found within the opening sections of the seven newspapers.

“Editorials” include editorials written by newspaper staff, individuals on the editorial board of a given newspaper, and editorials written by the newspaper editorial board as a whole, which do not have a stated author. “Letters to the editor” include only those specifically labeled as written by a reader, and not an employee, of the newspaper to the editor. “Political cartoons” include any and all political cartoons that have either a Birmingham or a broader civil rights focus. The broad “other category” includes all content that is not located on the front page or within an opening section. Lastly, “miscellaneous” includes any advertisements, special feature stories, and anything else noteworthy that does not fall into any of the other three main categories.

Cleveland Call and Post

The Cleveland Call and Post is the only African American and weekly newspaper

included in this study, and the only one that was not a daily newspaper. The tables depicting the data will include the date that the coverage came from. No other tables will incorporate specific dates due to size considerations. These limitations are clear when comparing the 8 issues of the Cleveland Call and Post published during the time period under analysis, with the 47 issues published by the other six newspapers in the same time period. The following two tables provide all of the information collected from the Cleveland Call and Post from May 2, 1963 through June 18, 1963.

<u>Cleveland Call and Post</u> Table 2						
	Front Page Headlines	Front Page Photos	Front Page Articles	Front Page News Briefs	Opening Section Articles	Opening Section Photos
05/04/63	0	0	2	0	9	1
05/11/63	2	2	2	0	7	7
05/18/63	2	3	5	0	16	11
05/25/63	1	0	3	0	12	0
06/01/63	0	0	3	0	13	0
06/08/63	1	1	3	0	13	0
06/15/63	3	3	4	0	9	12
06/22/63	1	3	1	0	11	4
Totals	10	12	23	0	90	35

<u>Cleveland Call and Post</u> Table 2.1							
	Other Articles	Editorials	Letters to the Editor	Political Cartoons	Other Photos	Other News Briefs	Miscellaneous
05/04/63	0	3	0	1	0	0	0
05/11/63	1	3	1	1	0	0	0
05/18/63	1	3	2	1	0	0	0
05/25/63	1	6	1	0	0	0	0
06/01/63	0	4	4	1	0	0	0
06/08/63	0	1	3	1	0	0	0
06/15/63	0	2	2	1	0	0	1
06/22/63	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
Totals	3	24	15	6	0	0	1

When taking into account the dramatically smaller number of issues that the Cleveland Call and Post printed in comparison to the other six daily newspapers, the Cleveland Call and Post proportionally provided the most coverage of any of the newspapers. This should come as no surprise given that the Birmingham protests and their aftermath were directly affecting African Americans and the Call and Post is the only representative of the Black Press included in this study. Every issue of the Call and Post included at least one front page article, one editorial, and seven opening section articles pertaining to the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. In addition to this, six of the eight issues had a front page headline and a political cartoon. From a quantitative perspective, the depth of the Call and Post's coverage is obvious.

From a qualitative perspective, the Call and Post provided the most supportive coverage of any of the seven newspapers. This should also come as no surprise given the fact that African Americans wrote and were the primary audience of the paper. Every editorial and letter to the

editor published in the Call and Post during the time frame is enthusiastically supportive of the Birmingham protesters, other anti-segregation demonstrations across the country, and the civil rights movement more generally. For example, an editorial written by Charles H. Loeb on June 1st is titled “A Race Grown Weary of Waiting,”³ while another editorial on that same day is titled “A Challenge The Government Must Meet”⁴ on the subject of Alabama Governor George Wallace's attempts to prevent two African American students from enrolling at the University of Alabama.

In conjunction with this, *all* of the Call and Post's articles on the protests and their aftermath paint the protesters and demonstrators in a sympathetic light. By way of contrast, an article in the May 3rd issue of the Cincinnati Enquirer is entitled “Negro Students Arrested: Hookey-Players Stage March.”⁵ No article in the Call and Post, on the other hand, is entitled in anything other than a supportive manner. Following from all of these quantitative and qualitative examples, it is safe to conclude that the Cleveland Call and Post provided the most frequent and sympathetic coverage of any of the seven newspapers studied.

Cleveland Plain Dealer

The Cleveland Plain Dealer, the paper with the highest circulation in Ohio, was also the lengthiest of the six Ohio newspapers. On average, both the daily and Sunday issues of the Plain Dealer are longer than any of the other five Ohio papers. The Plain Dealer's average issue length is comparable to that of the Chicago Tribune for 1963. Given Cleveland's location in the northeastern part of Ohio, combined with its northeastern cultural sensibilities, the Plain Dealer is expected to provide a large amount of, and favorable, coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. The tables below detailing the data collected from the Cleveland Plain

3 Cleveland Call and Post June 1, 1963 Editorial.

4 Ibid., Editorial.

5 Cincinnati Enquirer May 3, June 1963 Opening Section Article.

Dealer will only give the totals, and not the individual dates of each piece of content, unlike the Cleveland Call and Post.

<u>Cleveland Plain Dealer</u> Table 3						
	Front Page Headlines	Front Page Photos	Front Page Articles	Front Page News Briefs	Opening Section Articles	Opening Section Photos
Totals	20	16	44	0	132	21

<u>Cleveland Plain Dealer</u> Table 3.1							
	Other Articles	Editorials	Letters to the Editor	Political Cartoons	Other Photos	Other News Briefs	Miscellaneous
Totals	10	37	26	9	7	0	1

Out of all six Ohio newspapers, the Cleveland Plain Dealer had the most opening section articles, the second most opening section photos, the second most editorials, the most letters to the editor, the most other photos, and tied for the second most political cartoons. Of the newspapers analyzed, including the Chicago Tribune, the Plain Dealer has the most other articles, the most letters to the editors, and the most other photos. The Plain Dealer, like the Cleveland Call and Post, provided a large amount of coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. While the Cincinnati Enquirer did not have a single front page article on the Birmingham protests on May 7th, the May 7th Cleveland Plain Dealer had a front page photo and an above the fold, front page article.

In addition to providing extensive coverage of the Birmingham protests and their

aftermath, the Plain Dealer's editorials, letters to the editor, and political cartoons were generally supportive. One editorial from the Plain Dealer's editorial board on May 8th asserted that the mess in Birmingham continues to bubble ominously. The racial troubles in the Alabama metropolis must be settled, the sooner the better, before serious casualties result. If the proposed bi-racial talks can do it, fine; if they cannot, talks at another level must be arranged promptly.⁶

Though the Plain Dealer supported the goals of the Birmingham protesters and more equal rights for African Americans, its support was not unequivocal. In the same editorial, the Plain Dealer editorial board cautioned that “while we sympathize with the general purpose of the [Birmingham] campaign, as we said Sunday, we are not happy about children joining in. They should be in school, should not be induced to play hooky.”⁷ The issue of the protest's heavy reliance on children warrants extra attention.

The most frequent critique that the protests received in many of the newspapers pertained to the use of children in the protests and children skipping school. It is crucial to note, however, that the protests would not have succeeded without the children. The children were the lifeblood of the protest. Students, particularly younger students, made up a majority of the initial protesters and their enthusiasm and dedication was crucial to the success of the protests. Furthermore, images of children attacked by police dogs and blasted by police fire hoses drew, and maintained, national public attention. Although the Cleveland Plain Dealer did not provide as supportive or thorough coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath as the Cleveland Call and Post, the Plain Dealer provided extensive, detailed, and generally supportive coverage.

6 Cleveland Plain Dealer May 8, 1963 Editorial.

7 Ibid., Editorial.

Akron Beacon Journal

The Akron Beacon Journal is the geographically nearest newspaper to the two Cleveland newspapers that have already been analyzed. Akron has some of the same northeastern attitudes as Cleveland, but those attitudes are mixed with the heart and character of a manufacturing center. Out of the six cities analyzed, Akron had a higher percentage of its employed citizens in manufacturing as of 1960, 44.7 percent, than any of the other cities.⁸ The next closest city was Cleveland with 38.4 percent of its employed citizens working in manufacturing.⁹ Best known for manufacturing rubber, it is fair to view Akron in 1963 as a predominantly blue collar city. Akron's largest newspaper, the Akron Beacon Journal provided comprehensive and largely receptive coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. The tables below detailing the data collected from the Beacon Journal will only give the totals, and not the individual dates of each piece of content.

<u>Akron Beacon Journal</u> Table 4						
	Front Page Headlines	Front Page Photos	Front Page Articles	Front Page News Briefs	Opening Section Articles	Opening Section Photos
Totals	21	15	51	3	119	15

<u>Akron Beacon Journal</u> Table 4.1							
	Other Articles	Editorials	Letters to the Editor	Political Cartoons	Other Photos	Other News Briefs	Miscellaneous
Totals	5	24	6	4	0	3	1

⁸ 1960 United States Census Ohio, 37.

⁹ Ibid., 37.

In comparison to the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Akron Beacon Journal's length of its daily and Sunday issues were, on average, shorter than those of the Plain Dealer and the Chicago Tribune. Following from this, the Beacon Journal's coverage of major news stories, including civil rights events, were also shorter on average. This discrepancy in the length of coverage could be explained by the much smaller population that the Beacon Journal served than the Plain Dealer. The Beacon Journal had the second most front page headlines, 21, and the second most front page articles, 51, of all seven newspapers. Out of the six Ohio newspapers, the Beacon Journal had the second most opening section articles. The data indicates that the Akron Beacon Journal provided extensive coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. Given its high number of articles and low number of editorials and letters to the editor, however, the Beacon Journal devoted little of its opinion pages to the civil rights movement.

The quality and slant of the Beacon Journal's coverage can be summed up as thorough and largely balanced. An editorial published on May 9th sums up the general attitude of the Beacon Journal toward the protests, “while the Negroes were asking for nothing more than their legal rights, many of the most sympathetic supporters were critical of the irresponsible leadership which exposed hundreds of children to physical danger.”¹⁰ Though supportive of the goals of the protesters, the editorial expresses skepticism and displeasure over the nature of the protests. Another Beacon Journal editorial on May 21st expressed support for the Supreme Court's decision in “sit-in” cases, which “said that individuals may not be prosecuted for trespass because of refusal to leave segregated private commercial premises.”¹¹ Later in that same editorial, the editorial board praised this decision as “another step toward full recognition of equal rights for all citizens.”¹² Even though the Akron Beacon Journal provided fewer opinion

10 Akron Beacon Journal May 9, 1963 Editorial.

11 Akron Beacon Journal May 21, 1963 Editorial.

12 Ibid., Editorial.

pieces than the Cleveland Plain Dealer on the Birmingham protests and their aftermath, its editorials were usually supportive, though not unconditionally so, of the civil rights movement.

Cincinnati Enquirer

Cincinnati is the most Southern city out of the six in this study. Combined with being the most geographically southern, Cincinnati is by far the most culturally Southern city in Ohio. Cincinnati shares much tighter cultural ties with Kentucky than it does with Cleveland or Akron. Following from this southern sentiment, it should come as no surprise that Cincinnati has the most troubled racial history and was the most politically conservative of all the cities analyzed. Despite being a nominally northern city, Cincinnati was nowhere near integrated in 1963 and was more likely to push back against civil rights protests and forced integration, like Birmingham, than it was to embrace them. As a result of Cincinnati's troubled racial history, one would expect the Enquirer to provide limited and skeptical coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. The tables below detailing the data collected from the Cincinnati Enquirer will only give the totals, and not the individual dates of each piece of content.

<u>Cincinnati Enquirer</u> Table 5						
	Front Page Headlines	Front Page Photos	Front Page Articles	Front Page News Briefs	Opening Section Articles	Opening Section Photos
Totals	6	5	29	56	112	17

<u>Cincinnati Enquirer</u> Table 5.1							
	Other Articles	Editorials	Letters to the Editor	Political Cartoons	Other Photos	Other News Briefs	Miscellaneous
Totals	1	23	6	9	0	0	1

The lengths of the issues of the Cincinnati Enquirer were comparable to lengths of the Akron Beacon Journal and the Toledo Blade. From a data standpoint, the Enquirer had by far the fewest front page headlines and front page photos out of all seven newspapers. Additionally, the Enquirer had the fewest front page articles out of the six daily newspapers. The Enquirer, however, was tied for the second most political cartoons, tied for third most letters to the editor, and had the fourth most editorials. The Enquirer had by far the most front page news briefs of any of the newspapers with 56; no other newspaper had more than 7. Though its news coverage was limited, the Enquirer covered the Birmingham protests and their aftermath well through editorials, letters to the editor, and political cartoons.

Unlike the previous three newspapers analyzed, many of the opinion pieces in the Cincinnati Enquirer were questioning and not supportive of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. This lack of support is evidenced primarily in the editorials that the Enquirer ran following the beginning of the Birmingham protests in May. A May 11 editorial by David Lawrence asserted that the Birmingham “demonstrations were organized in the last few days and thousands of participants paraded without local permits in order to provoke arrests and publicize the disorders.”¹³ Though many of the editorials in the Cincinnati Enquirer were not completely supportive of the Birmingham protests, a May 17 editorial by Walter Lippmann argued that the federal government “has a duty to use its moral influence and its material power, which are very

13 Cincinnati Enquirer May 11, 1963 Editorial.

considerable, to promote gradual and peaceable achievement of equal rights in public places and in public life.”¹⁴ It is clear that the editorials of the Cincinnati Enquirer were the least supportive and most doubtful of the merits of the Birmingham protests out of the seven newspapers studied. However, the Enquirer's editorials were still generally supportive of the goals of the civil rights movement. In sum, the Enquirer provided detailed, but less supportive coverage, of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath.

Toledo Blade

Toledo, and its largest newspaper the Toledo Blade, is the most northwestern Ohio city out of the six. Like Akron, Toledo is an industrial city that depended on manufacturing. Toledo's manufacturing dependence in 1963 was even more pronounced than it is today. Combining the economic similarities between Toledo and Akron with the northern cultural similarities between Toledo and Cleveland, it is fair to expect the Toledo Blade's coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath to be in line with the coverage provided by the Akron Beacon Journal and the Cleveland Plain Dealer. The length of the Toledo Blade's newspapers, both daily and Sunday, however, were much shorter than that of the Cleveland Plain Dealer and were more similar to the length of the Beacon Journal's issues. Articles in the Blade covering major stories, including the civil rights movement, were also shorter on average than similar articles in the Plain Dealer. This discrepancy in the length of coverage could be explained by the much smaller population that the Blade served than the Plain Dealer. The tables below detailing the data collected from the Toledo Blade will only give the totals, and not the individual dates of each piece of content.

14 Cincinnati Enquirer May 17, 1963 Editorial.

<u>Toledo Blade</u> Table 6						
	Front Page Headlines	Front Page Photos	Front Page Articles	Front Page News Briefs	Opening Section Articles	Opening Section Photos
Totals	22	17	60	0	111	12

<u>Toledo Blade</u> Table 6.1							
	Other Articles	Editorials	Letters to the Editor	Political Cartoons	Other Photos	Other News Briefs	Miscellaneous
Totals	0	57	4	22	1	0	0

From a statistical perspective, the Toledo Blade had the most front page headlines, the most front page articles, and the second most front page photos out of the seven newspapers. The Toledo Blade also possessed the most editorials and political cartoons of any newspaper studied. Not the leader in every category, the Toledo Blade had the fewest opening section photos, the second fewest opening section articles, and tied for the fewest letters to the editor. Even though the Toledo Blade published 47 issues in the same time period that the weekly Cleveland Call and Post published eight issues, the Blade only had 21 more opening section articles than the Call and Post. The data shows that the Toledo Blade provided the best front page coverage, some of the worst opening section coverage, and the best opinion coverage. While the Toledo Blade had 57 editorials, no other newspaper studied had more than 37. Continuing the same theme, while the Toledo Blade published 22 political cartoons dealing with the Birmingham protests and the civil rights movement, no other newspaper published more than 9. This disparity is even more striking considering that the Toledo Blade had neither the highest circulation nor the lengthiest

issues of the newspapers studied.

It is clear from the two tables above that the Toledo Blade provided a great deal of coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. Given the number of editorials and political cartoons published by the Toledo Blade, it should not be too difficult to discern the quality and slant of its coverage. In an editorial on May 12th, Eric Sevareid passionately argued that African Americans are bound to win in this struggle for their civil rights not because “their present aims are so limited and unarguable, but because they have succeeded in involving us all, whoever we are, wherever we live within the nation's frontiers.”¹⁵ David Lawrence, however, in an editorial on May 14th lambasted President Kennedy for “ordering federal troops to mobilize in Alabama to deal with future rioting or local disturbances”¹⁶ because Lawrence believed there was not even “the slightest legal basis for the use of such power [ordering federal troops into a state] under the Constitution unless requested by the state government.”¹⁷ In the Birmingham case there was clearly no request made by the state government for the use of federal troops.

The sheer number of opinion pieces combined with solid news coverage on the front page and the opening section makes it clear that the Toledo Blade provided a high quantity and quality of coverage. Generally, the Blade took a supportive stance of the Birmingham protests and the civil rights movement. Though David Lawrence's editorials published in the Toledo Blade were conservative in nature and not very supportive of the Birmingham protests or President Kennedy's handling of the protests, almost all of the other opinion pieces supported the civil rights movement. In particular, all 22 of the Toledo Blade's political cartoons were either supportive of the Birmingham protests or civil rights more generally. This includes the two political cartoons below. It is important to note the difference between the large number of civil

15 Toledo Blade May 12, 1963 Editorial.

16 Toledo Blade May 14, 1963 Editorial.

17 Ibid., Editorial.

rights related political cartoons and the small number of civil rights related photos in the Blade. This disparity between political cartoons and photos is seen in the Blade's coverage of other major news stories as well. This disparity can be explained by the large focus that the Blade placed on opinion and editorial pieces.



The political cartoon on the right was published on May 30 and the political cartoon on the left was published on May 26. Beginning with the cartoon on the left, the individual in the trash can is meant to represent Bull Connor and his police regime in Birmingham. On the back of his pants he has patches, one reads “Alabama Supreme Court”¹⁸ and the other reads “US Court of Appeals.”¹⁹ The caption above the political cartoon reads “A funny thing happened on the way to

18 Toledo Blade May 26, 1963 Political Cartoon.

19 Ibid., Political Cartoon.

kicking out 1,000 school kids . . .”²⁰ and it is important to note that the political cartoon's publication comes on the heels of the release of thousands of schoolchildren, who had previously been demonstrating, from the Birmingham jails. The implication here is that the “Bull Connor Regime” was also tossed out on to the trash heap with the release of these kids. Based on its desire to throw Bull Connor out with the trash, it is clear that this political cartoon is supportive of the Birmingham protesters.

Switching to the political cartoon on the right, this cartoon has a giant steamroller labeled “All Deliberate Speed”²¹ with what looks like a Southerner asleep at the wheel blocking a road. The road sign indicates that the road is named “Equality, US '54-63.”²² Also on the road is a man in a black robe labeled Supreme Court who admonishes the steamroller by yelling “that was for paving the road, not blocking it.”²³ The implication and the criticism in this cartoon is that the Supreme Court in the *Brown* decision in 1954 ordered schools to desegregate at “all deliberate speed” in an attempt to bring about the integration process. Southerners and other opponents of school integration, however, have used “all deliberate speed” to block integration from 1954 through 1963; hence the placement of the steamroller in the middle of road entitled US Equality 54-63. This cartoon is criticizing the South for impeding integration, which once again shows that the Toledo Blade's cartoons were supportive of the civil rights movement. In sum, the Toledo Blade provided comprehensive and supportive coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath.

Columbus Evening Dispatch

Columbus, the capital of Ohio, underwent tremendous growth and expansion since 1963. Today, Columbus, within the city limits, is by far the most populous city in Ohio. In 1963,

20 Ibid., Political Cartoon.

21 Toledo Blade May 30, 1963 Political Cartoon.

22 Ibid., Political Cartoon.

23 Ibid., Political Cartoon.

however, Cleveland and Cincinnati both had significantly larger populations than Columbus in Ohio. Out of the five Ohio cities studied, Columbus is closest to Cincinnati and farthest away from Cleveland. Columbus, unlike Toledo or Akron, was not a large manufacturing or industrial center; instead its economy was driven by the Ohio State University, its function as the capital of the state of Ohio, and as a retailing and distribution center. Given the geographic proximity and cultural similarities between Columbus and Cincinnati, the Columbus Evening Dispatch would be expected to have coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath that is analogous to coverage in the Cincinnati Enquirer. The tables below detailing the data collected from the Columbus Evening Dispatch will only give the totals, and not the individual dates of each piece of content.

<u>Columbus Evening Dispatch</u> Table 7						
	Front Page Headlines	Front Page Photos	Front Page Articles	Front Page News Briefs	Opening Section Articles	Opening Section Photos
Totals	11	12	35	7	108	14

<u>Columbus Evening Dispatch</u> Table 7.1							
	Other Articles	Editorials	Letters to the Editor	Political Cartoons	Other Photos	Other News Briefs	Miscellaneous
Totals	1	18	4	1	0	2	0

As noted earlier, the Columbus Evening Dispatch is the only evening newspaper out of the seven. Though the Dispatch was not a morning newspaper, its design and articles were very similar to that of the other six newspapers. There were no major stylistic or lay out differences between the Dispatch and the morning newspapers. Furthermore, the articles, pictures, and

editorials covering the Birmingham protests and their aftermath were not substantially different from the other newspapers. This broad similarity in how the Birmingham protests were reported shows that the Dispatch did not have a competitive advantage over the other newspapers in publishing stories with more up to date information because of its afternoon publication. The similarities in content likely arise from the fact that all of the newspapers covered, including the Dispatch, served large urban areas and had high circulations.

The Columbus Evening Dispatch, from a statistical standpoint, had the second fewest front page headlines, tied for the second fewest front page photos, and the third fewest front page articles out of the seven newspapers. Additionally, the Dispatch had the second fewest opening section articles and the second fewest opening section photos. Continuing the same trend, the Dispatch possessed the second fewest editorials, tied for the fewest letters to the editor, and the second fewest political cartoons. While the Toledo Blade had 57 editorials and 22 political cartoons, the Dispatch only had 18 editorials and one political cartoon. The Dispatch did positively stand out in one area, however, as it had the second most front page news briefs of the newspapers studied. Though the Dispatch covered the Birmingham protests and their aftermath, in comparison to the other newspapers studied, it provided less coverage than *all* of the other papers.

The ideological slant of the news coverage and the opinion pieces in the Dispatch were closer to those of the Enquirer than any other paper. An editorial written by Charles Bartlett on May 15 criticized the nature, timing, and practice of the Birmingham protests. More specifically, Bartlett claimed “the agitation in Birmingham has afforded the nation a graphic lesson in the extent to which control of the Negroes' drive for equality has slipped into impatient hands that are more concerned with dramatic impact than the logic of timing.”²⁴ Bartlett's editorial

24 Columbus Evening Dispatch May 15, 1963 Editorial.

summarizes the general ideological stance taken by the Dispatch to most of the civil rights protests. Although generally, and theoretically, supportive of the push for racial equality and integration, both Dispatch and Enquirer opinion pieces were often questioning and skeptical of the actions taken by African Americans to reach their desired goals. One explanation for the similarities in the opinion pieces between the Dispatch and the Enquirer comes from the fact that they both often published editorials written by David Lawrence.

Many of the newspapers studied printed editorials from nationally syndicated editorial columnists. Newspapers in the 1960s looking for a conservative voice often published editorials by David Lawrence who was one of the most influential political columnists in the country in 1963. Lawrence, one of the founders of *U.S. News & World Report*, had his columns published in newspapers across the country during the first half of the twentieth century. At the peak of his popularity, his columns appeared in more than 300 newspapers nationally. Lawrence was most famous for his conservative and fiercely anticommunist views. On the issue of civil rights, Lawrence was well known as an opponent against the movement and federal desegregation efforts. In his editorials on the Birmingham protests and the integration of the University of Alabama, he expressed support for Governor Wallace and other local authorities and contempt for President Kennedy's federalization of the Alabama National Guard.

In an editorial on May 17, the Columbus Evening Dispatch editorial board revealed its general attitude toward Birmingham and the broader civil rights movement. With regard to what it refers to as the disorders in Birmingham, the editorial notes that

public demonstrations for redress of grievances are every citizen's right. When they break into rioting, they cannot be condoned. Where the demonstrators in Birmingham have rioted, they are in the wrong. Where segregationists have attempted to interfere with

peaceful demonstrations and drawn violence; they must share responsibility for the results.²⁵

As mentioned above, the editorial supported the push for equal rights for African Americans and the end to segregation, but it deplores how the demonstrations are unfolding. The editorial goes on to plead for the establishment of “a set of guidelines for procedure – a program based on moderation, progressive steps, graduality with specified time limits”²⁶ and sound leadership that will end segregation and grant African Americans equal rights in a timely manner without conflict. Like every other newspaper studied, the Columbus Evening Dispatch provided detailed news coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. The ideological slant of the Dispatch's editorials, however, is best described as receptive yet questioning.

Chicago Tribune

The Chicago Tribune is the only non-Ohio newspaper analyzed and it is included because it was the paper of record for the Midwest in 1963. Chicago, according to the 1960 US Census, was the second largest city in the country and by far the largest city in the Midwest. In 1960, Chicago had twice as many people as the next largest city in the Midwest: Detroit. The Chicago Tribune had the highest circulation of any newspaper in the region and it was the flagship daily newspaper of Chicago. Out of the six cities analyzed, Chicago had the largest African American population and Cleveland had the second largest. Given Chicago's large African American population, it is expected that the Tribune would provide detailed and fairly favorable coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. The tables below detailing the data collected from the Chicago Tribune will only give the totals, and not the individual dates of each piece of content.

25 Columbus Evening Dispatch May 17, 1963 Editorial.

26 Ibid., Editorial.

<u>Chicago Tribune</u> Table 8						
	Front Page Headlines	Front Page Photos	Front Page Articles	Front Page News Briefs	Opening Section Articles	Opening Section Photos
Totals	21	19	34	0	138	41

<u>Chicago Tribune</u> Table 8.1							
	Other Articles	Editorials	Letters to the Editor	Political Cartoons	Other Photos	Other News Briefs	Miscellaneous
Totals	4	3	6	0	0	45	2

It is important to note that the Chicago Tribune's daily issues, both weekday and Sunday, were longer than those of the six Ohio newspapers. Comparatively speaking, the Tribune issues' lengths are most comparable in size to those of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, but the Tribune's are still slightly longer. The Chicago Tribune, from a statistical perspective, tied for the second most front page headlines, had the most front page photos, the most opening section articles, and the most opening section photos. The Tribune's greatest statistical advantage came in other news briefs where the Tribune had 45 and no other newspaper had more than three. Conversely, the Tribune had the third fewest front page articles, the fewest editorials, tied for the second fewest letters to the editor, and the fewest political cartoons. The Chicago Tribune provided thorough news coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath; however, it had the fewest pieces of opinion content, when one combines editorials, letters to the editor, and political cartoons together, of any of the newspapers.

A large amount of the news articles in all seven of the newspapers are very similar because they come from, or heavily rely on, reports from the AP or UPI. The Chicago Tribune, differs slightly from the other six newspaper in that it published news articles that no other newspaper published. For example, the Tribune on May 10 published an article titled “Call Kennedy's Hand in Barring Alabama Action: Congressmen Assert There is Ample Basis for Federal Government to Intervene.”²⁷ This article focused on how some members of Congress, such as Representative Emanuel Celler of New York, “questioned President Kennedy's statement that the federal government lacks legal grounds on which to act in Birmingham.”²⁸ None of the other newspapers published this article. In sum, the Chicago Tribune provided the most news coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath, but the Tribune also published the fewest opinion pieces of any of the newspapers. Therefore, the Tribune's coverage could be best characterized as relatively impartial and news focused.

Analysis of Results

The table below details who owned the analyzed newspapers in 1963. The owner of a newspaper can play a role in determining what news his or her newspaper decides to cover and the ideological slant of editorial board and writers of the newspapers' opinion pieces. Typically newspapers who were owned by larger corporations or companies, such as the Tribune Company or E. W. Scripps, had less active and opinionated editorial boards and fewer pieces of opinion content in their newspapers. Papers that were either owned locally or by a much smaller company, such as the Toledo Blade and the Columbus Evening Dispatch, were able to have more active and ideological editorial boards and opinion content. Out of the seven newspapers analyzed, four were owned by small companies or families (Toledo Blade, Columbus Evening

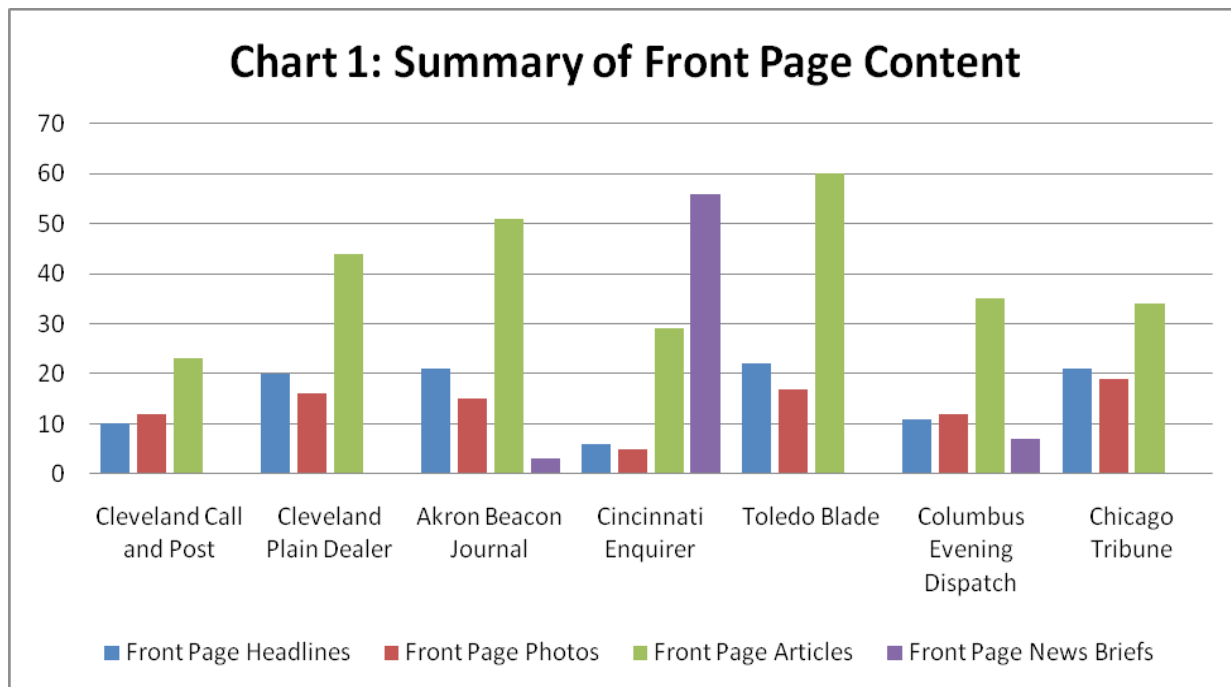
²⁷ Chicago Tribune May 10, 1963 Opening Section Article.

²⁸ Ibid., Opening Section Article.

Dispatch, Cleveland Call and Post) and three were owned by larger corporations (Chicago Tribune, Cincinnati Enquirer, and Akron Beacon Journal). Block Communications, who owned only one other newspaper in 1963, ownership of the Toledo Blade may help explain why the Blade published so many political cartoons and had such a robust editorial page. Similarly, the smaller amount of opinion content in the Chicago Tribune, Cincinnati Enquirer, and Akron Beacon Journal may be partially explained by their ownership by larger companies.

Newspaper	Owner
<u>Akron Beacon Journal</u>	Knight Newspapers Inc
<u>Chicago Tribune</u>	Tribune Company
<u>Cincinnati Enquirer</u>	E. W. Scripps
<u>Cleveland Call and Post</u>	William Walker
<u>Cleveland Plain Dealer</u>	Cleveland Press
<u>Columbus Evening Dispatch</u>	The Wolfe Family
<u>Toledo Blade</u>	Block Communications

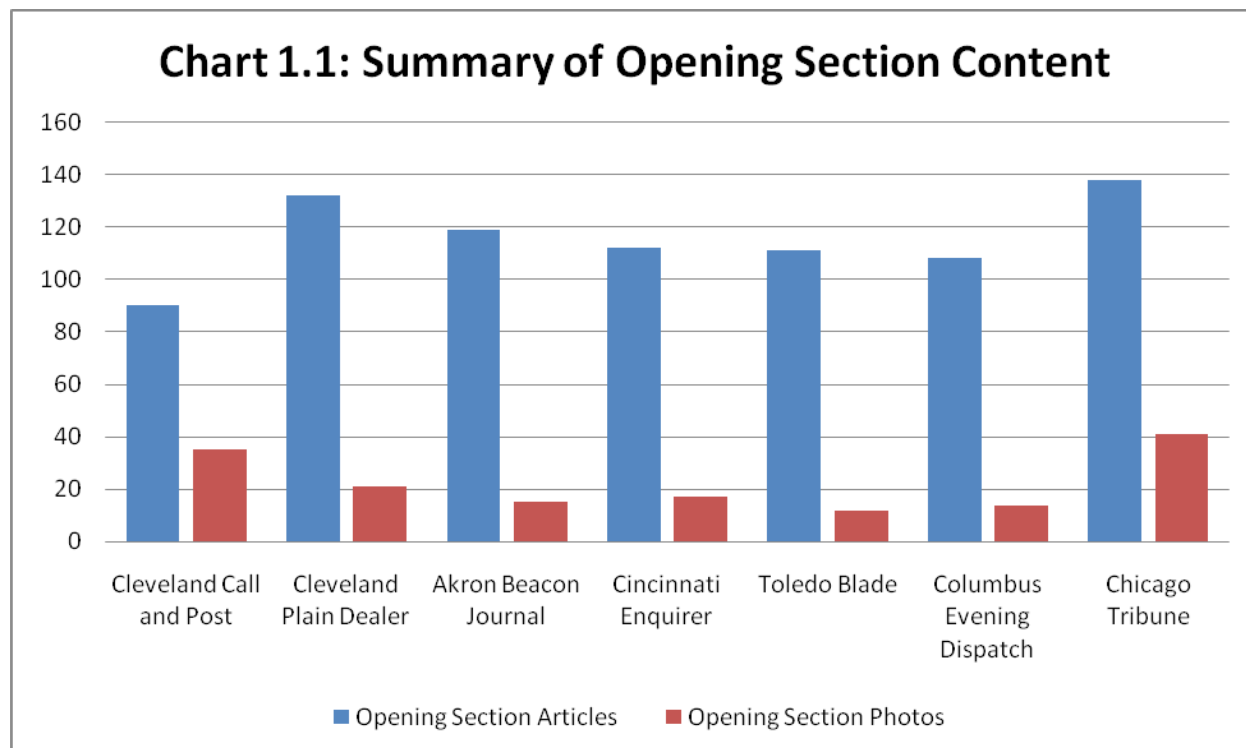
From the data section above, it is clear that the seven newspapers analyzed were not homogeneous in their coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. It is also important to note that the Cleveland Call and Post had the best coverage in *every* aspect from front page photos to editorials. The graphs and the data below do not do the Call and Post justice, because the Call and Post published 39 fewer issues than the other six daily newspapers. Though there were similarities amongst the seven newspapers, primarily that all of them provided news and opinion coverage, there were significant differences in the quantity and nature of that coverage. The graph below represents a summary of the front page content for all seven newspapers analyzed.



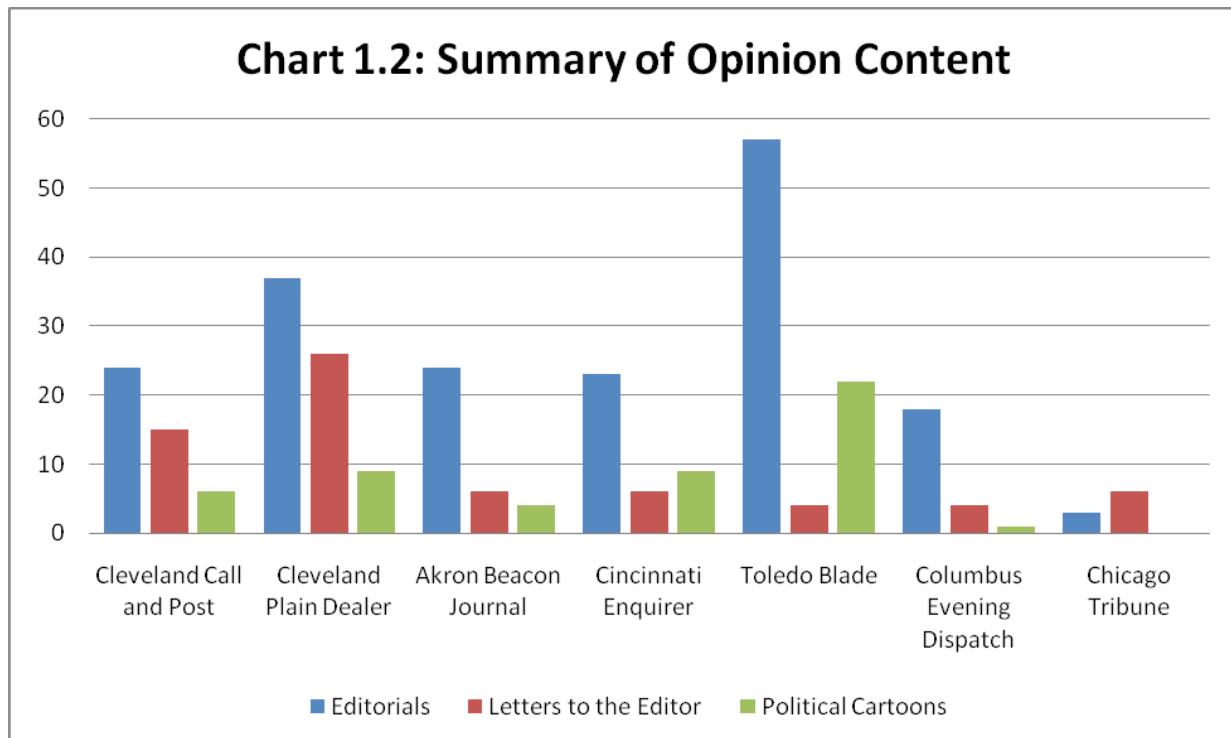
This graph shows the disparities between the highs and lows of the front page content for each of the newspapers. The Toledo Blade and Akron Beacon Journal had more than three times as many front page headlines than the Cincinnati Enquirer. For front page photos, the Cleveland Plain Dealer and Chicago Tribune had more than double the photos of the Cincinnati Enquirer. The Toledo Blade had double the front page articles of the Cincinnati Enquirer and the Cleveland Call and Post. When it comes to front page news briefs, the Cincinnati Enquirer had more, 56, than the other six newspapers combined. Excluding front page news briefs, which were only heavily used by the Enquirer, the newspapers with the most comprehensive front page coverage were the Toledo Blade and Akron Beacon Journal. Out of the six daily newspapers, the Columbus Evening Dispatch had the worst and least amount of front page coverage.

The graph below details the differences in opening section content amongst all seven newspapers. Similar to the front page headlines, there were some differences amongst the seven newspapers in terms of opening section photos. The Chicago Tribune had the most opening section photos with 41 and the Toledo Blade had the fewest opening section photos with 12. A

similar trend is evident in the opening section articles in the six daily newspapers as the disparity between the newspaper with the most opening section articles, Chicago Tribune with 138, and the fewest opening section articles, Columbus Evening Dispatch with 108, was relatively small. Out of all of the daily newspapers, the Chicago Tribune had the best opening section coverage and the Columbus Evening Dispatch had the worst opening section coverage.

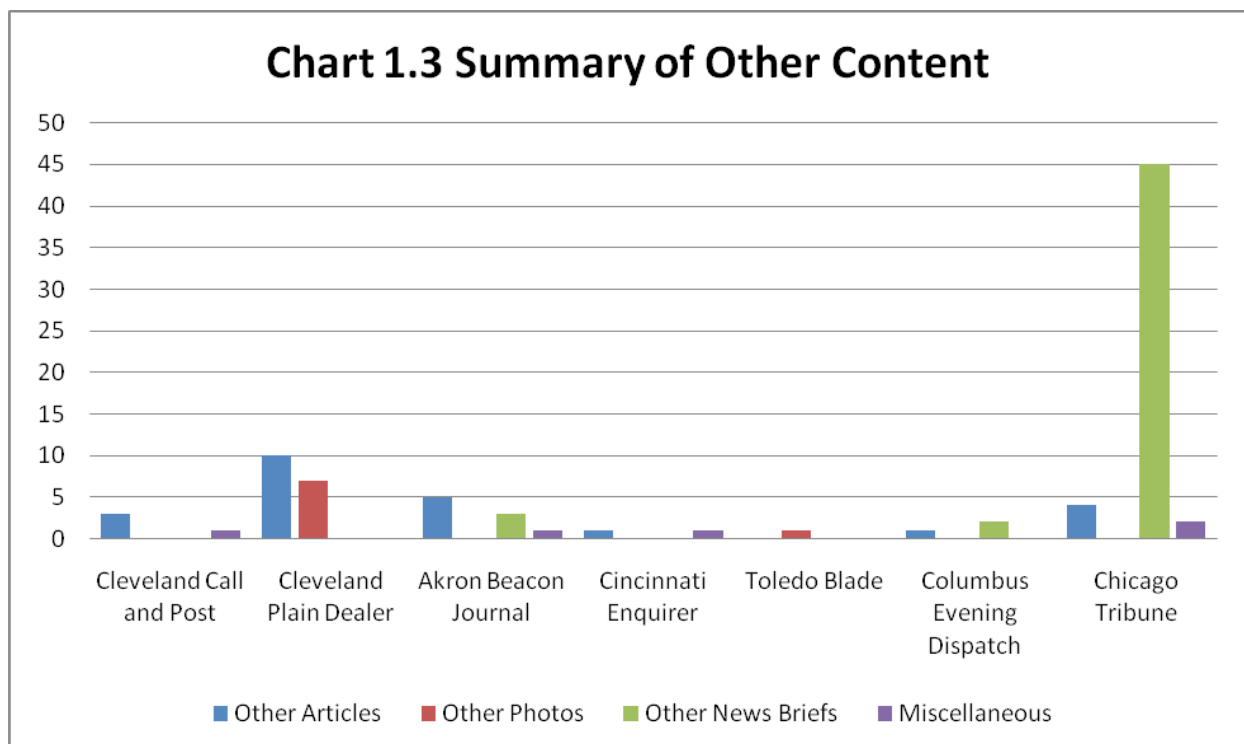


The following graph represents a summary of the opinion content of the seven newspapers analyzed. The Toledo Blade had by far the most editorials with 57 and the Chicago Tribune had the fewest editorials with three. For letters to the editor, the Cleveland Plain Dealer had the most with 26 and the Toledo Blade had the fewest with six. The Toledo Blade also had the most political cartoons with 22, while the Chicago Tribune had the fewest with zero. In sum, the Toledo Blade and the Cleveland Plain Dealer had the best opinion content coverage and the Chicago Tribune had, by far, the worst opinion content coverage out of the newspapers studied.



In evaluating opinion content, it is important to note that all opinion pieces (editorials, letters to the editor, and political cartoons) were counted even if they criticized the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. The vast majority of opinion pieces, however, were supportive of the goals of the civil rights movement. There were no political cartoons critical of the civil rights movement and there were few critical editorials and letters to the editor. Any opinion piece that addressed the civil rights movement, with a positive or negative slant, gave the reader of that newspaper more information and another viewpoint on the events unfolding in the South. All of the newspapers studied provided opinion pieces. Silence in opinion pages about the Birmingham protests and the civil rights movement more broadly was not a responsible response for a newspaper because silence meant less information was getting out to the readers. On an issue so far removed from the lives of most Ohioans and Chicagoans, and an issue where so little information was available, responsible newspapers had a duty to report the news and to provide at least some opinion pieces on the Birmingham protests and their aftermath.

The following graph represents a summary of the other content - non front page, opening section, and opinion content - of the newspapers studied. It is important to note that there was far less data in all of the other content categories. Aside from the Chicago Tribune, which had 45 other news briefs, and the Cleveland Plain Dealer, which had ten other articles and seven other photos, no other newspaper had more than five in any of the other categories. In line with the data in the graph, The Toledo Blade had the worst and least other content coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath. The Chicago Tribune and the Cleveland Plain Dealer had the best other content coverage.



Conclusion

After collecting and analyzing all of the data, a clear hierarchy of newspapers, from best to worst, in their coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath emerged. The Cleveland Call and Post provided the best coverage when all factors are considered. For each of the Call and Post's eight issues, the Birmingham protests and other civil rights events had a

central focus. If the Call and Post had even half as many issues as the other six daily newspapers, the Call and Post would have had the most coverage in every single category. The Columbus Evening Dispatch, when all factors are considered, provided the worst coverage because it had the smallest amount of data when the front page, opening section, and other sections were added together. The Cleveland Call and Post also provided the most supportive coverage, while the Columbus Evening Dispatch provided the least supportive coverage. The hierarchy or spectrum of the quantity and quality of newspaper coverage, from best to worst, proceeds as follows: The Cleveland Call and Post, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Chicago Tribune, the Toledo Blade, the Akron Beacon Journal, the Cincinnati Enquirer, and the Columbus Evening Dispatch. It is vital to note, however, that even the Dispatch provided more than adequate and relatively favorable coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath.

The main conclusion that can, and needs to be, drawn is that Ohioans received in-depth coverage of the Birmingham protests across the state. If an Ohioan learned everything he knew about the civil rights movement from any of the six Ohio newspapers analyzed in 1963, he or she would be informed of what was going on. For the most part, all of the newspapers provided background, updates, details, and commentary both on the protests in Birmingham and other civil rights protests and developments across the South. The two major aftermath events of the Birmingham protests, the murder of Medgar Evers and President Kennedy's national television address and introduction of his civil rights legislation, were also well covered and explained.

The commentaries in the opinion pieces on all of these events were also generally receptive. Though complaints about the use of children in the Birmingham protests, the violence that accompanied many of the demonstrations, and the perceived impatience of some African Americans and their leaders were present in some editorials and letters to the editor, an

underlying support for integration, albeit gradual integration, and political equality for African Americans permeated a vast majority of the opinion pieces. Even though none of the newspapers, except for the Cleveland Call and Post, could be considered an unabashed advocate for the goals of the Birmingham protests and the civil rights movement, all of the newspapers dutifully reported on the civil rights events unfolding in the South in May and June of 1963.

The likelihood that newspapers' coverage of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath affected individuals' attitudes who were already either fervent supporters or staunch opponents of the civil rights movement in Ohio or Chicago is very low. Conversely, the views of urban Ohioans who were either previously indifferent to or unaware of the civil rights movement and read their local newspaper, however, were likely altered. Given the generally positive and detailed reporting that Ohio newspapers provided on the Birmingham protests and their aftermath, it is not outlandish to think that previously indifferent or unaware Ohioans developed more supportive views of the civil rights movement. It is difficult to imagine an average Ohioan seeing the pictures of attack dogs and police fire hoses unleashed on young African Americans plastered across the front page of his or her local newspaper and that same Ohioan taking a more opposing stance on civil rights than he or she already possessed. Drawing a small correlation between northern support for civil rights legislation and positive newspaper coverage of the civil rights movement is consistent with the findings of this paper.

Future Research

Another interesting part of this project is that it could be easily expanded. Little research has focused on how the civil rights movement was covered and reported to Americans across the country, meaning this project in the future could be broadened to include other important events in the civil rights movement or to include newspapers from other parts of the country. More

“national” newspapers such as the Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Atlanta Journal Constitution, and the New York Times could be included for comparative purposes in this project. Other newspapers from the Midwest as well as newspapers from the South, East, and West could be included to get a better picture of how the civil rights movement was covered in each of these regions. International newspapers from the Soviet Union, Europe, Africa, and South America could also be added. Studying newspapers from the Soviet Union would be especially interesting because the Soviet press often used America's civil rights issues as propaganda to boost the Soviet Union and to blast the United States simultaneously. In its present form, however, my research indicates that Ohioans received a detailed and slightly supportive account of the Birmingham protests and their aftermath.

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